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FROM THE COEUR D'ALENE PRESS

Group: Don't forget prairie option

Posted: Thursday, Jun 05, 2008 - 11:52:52 pm PDT

Email this story Printer friendly version By MAUREEN DOLAN

Staff writer

Possibility raised for joint high school facility on site

COEUR d'ALENE -- A group is working to keep the idea of a professional-technical education complex on the Rathdrum Prairie from falling by the wayside as public debate continues to swirl around North Idaho College's intent to purchase land for the creation of an educational corridor in Coeur d'Alene's downtown area.

Brett Boyer, Rathdrum city administrator, said representatives from the Lakeland School District, the city of Rathdrum and the Rathdrum Chamber of Commerce have been meeting to discuss what they can do to encourage the college to renew an option it holds on the purchase of 135 acres owned by Wayne Meyer and three of his brothers at the intersection of Lancaster and Meyer roads.

"We're weighing in to say, 'Hey, we think it's a good site,'" Boyer said. "There's plenty of room to grow. There's good access and the utilities are there."

Boyer said there could potentially be a joint high school facility on the site also.

Retiring Lakeland school superintendent Chuck Kinsey said the three local school districts -- Lakeland, Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls -- have been meeting with NIC representatives and members of the business community to explore the creation of a joint professional-technical high school.

Kinsey said that is something that has been in the works for some time.

"The group has expressed a strong interest in being co-located with NIC so their future plans are very important to us," Kinsey said.

In October 2006, NIC trustees authorized the college to enter into a two-year option to purchase the land from the Meyer family at a cost of \$100,000 per year.

The agreement locked in the purchase price at \$27,500 per acre.

The second year of the option expires in November.

To date, NIC representatives have not indicated whether the college intends to renew the option.

Two years ago, when NIC secured the right to buy the prairie land the discussion centered on using it for a professional-technical facility that would be a collaborative effort between NIC, the Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls and Lakeland school districts.

NIC spokesman Kent Propst said the trustees have made it clear that the college's commitment to the expansion of professional-technical education has not diminished as it explores the possibility of purchasing the 17-acre DeArmond Mill site adjacent to the campus for the educational corridor.

Developer Marshall Chesrown has an agreement to purchase the mill site from Stimson Lumber Company and has committed to sell it to North Idaho College or another government entity for \$10 million for the purpose of expanding education in the region.

The closing on the sale of the property from Stimson to Chesrown is not expected to take place until at least November.

Former state senator and Kootenai County commissioner Dick Compton said he doesn't think NIC has to choose between the Stimson mill site and the prairie site, but does need to be aware of the costs involved in expanding to a second campus.

He said the \$3.5 million purchase price "is just the start. You couldn't relocate the college there, but it would work as a satellite campus."

Compton said he supports the idea of using the prairie land for professional-technical education, but because NIC is landbound the college would be short-sighted not to take advantage of the opportunity to buy the mill site, as long as the price is within its appraised value.

"I think one of those things I regret most is the (land) I didn't buy when I had the chance," Compton said.

Rathdrum chamber president Jeff Smith said, in his personal opinion, it makes sense for NIC to purchase the mill site because it needs room to expand.

"There's a group of us, not necessarily all located in the northern part of the county, members of the manufacturers' consortium and the chamber, who are basically trying to work with NIC in making sure that as they develop the education corridor that this piece of ground that they've entered into this option to purchase continues to be considered," Smith said.

The group, Smith said, including the North Idaho Manufacturing Consortium, a business group comprising some of the area's top manufacturing companies, is exploring ways for NIC, the school districts and the business entities involved to come up with the money to purchase the land.

Smith said the city of Rathdrum has possible access to a \$500,000 state grant and a federal grant for the same amount. A "Gem Grant" could also come into play, he said.

"Our position is it doesn't have to be either or and probably what the community needs is both," Smith said. "What it comes down to is this, there is a conscious effort by many entities to try and figure out how to do both."

Staff writer Rick Thomas contributed to this report.

Adhering to fashion

Posted: Thursday, Jun 05, 2008 - 11:52:53 pm PDT

Email this story Printer friendly version By RYAN SHELTON

Staff writer

SHAWN GUST/Press

Amy Nuttal, left, and Cammy Kuchenski model their Super Mario Princess-themed prom dresses that are made entirely out of duct tape Thursday in Athol. The two Timberlake High School seniors are Idaho's only entries in a nationwide contest where the top three couples are awarded scholarships.

Timberlake seniors only Idaho entrants in contest to build prom dresses entirely out of duct tape

ATHOL -- When duct tape was invented during World War II, it was used by American troops for quick repairs on Jeeps, guns, aircraft and ammunition cases. It was even used on the moon to repair the fender of a lunar rover in 1972. But in recent years, this handyman's best friend has entered into an arena few could have foreseen -- the prom.

Timberlake High School seniors Amy Nuttal and Cammy Kuchenski are one of more than 200 couples nationwide who constructed their prom outfits and accessories entirely from duct tape. In its eighth year, the Duck brand's "Stuck at Prom" competition accepts entries from prom couples around the country, awarding the top three couples college scholarships.

"I think we have a good chance of winning," Nuttal said. "We worked really hard on our dresses and it shows."

Kuchenski, who plans to study fashion design at the University of Idaho, began sketching out dress ideas more than a year ago. The friends started constructing the Mario Brothers-themed outfits in October and went through 28 rolls and more than 3,000 feet of brightly colored tape.

"Most prom dresses are simple, short and straight," Kuckenski said. "Our designs are more elaborate than most of the others ... we've got ruffles, bows, flowers, corsages, shoes and crowns all made from duct tape."

Nuttal and Kuchenski wore their duct tape masterpieces to their senior prom on May 3, where they said reactions ranged from astonishment to disbelief. But after 45 minutes in the claustrophobic dresses they changed into their more traditional back-up gowns.

"They were really heavy and hot and uncomfortable," Nuttal said. "It was hard to move in them, we kind of had to waddle around like penguins."

A panel of judges will sort through photographs of the outfits and select the top 10 on June 13, after which votes can be cast on the competition's Web site (www.ducktapeclub.com) to determine the top three couples. The first-prize couple will each receive a \$3,000 cash scholarship. Second and third place winners will receive \$2,000 and \$1,000 respectively.

Although winners are not required to use prize money for education, Nuttal said she would.

"I could definitely use the money," she said, "I'm going to North Idaho College in the fall and then to the University of Idaho the year after that. If we won, I might be able to afford to go straight to UI."

Kuchenski and Nuttal are the only couple from Idaho entered in the contest.

Cd'A, UI near \$1.3M lease for Harbor Center

Posted: Thursday, Jun 05, 2008 - 11:52:55 pm PDT

Email this story Printer friendly version By MARC STEWART

Staff writer

Courtesy photo

The University of Idaho and the city of Coeur d'Alene are nearing a lease that will allow UI to direct \$1.3 million toward the proposed education corridor site (pictured).

COEUR d'ALENE -- The city is close to signing a \$1.3 million lease agreement with the University of Idaho for the Harbor Center property off Northwest Boulevard.

The 99-year lease will go before the city's general services committee next Monday at City Hall. After that it will likely go before the City Council on June 17. Then the state board of education will consider approving the agreement on June 19.

"The \$1.3 million is a negotiated amount," said University of Idaho Northern Idaho Associate Vice President Dr. Larry Branen. "Ninety-nine years is sufficient and we have a stipulation for a new building."

The agreement will allow the University of Idaho to direct \$1.3 million toward the proposed education corridor and the purchase of the DeArmond mill site from developer Marshall Chesrown for \$10 million.

If North Idaho College or another government agency acquires the 17 acres along the Spokane River, the lease has provisions that will allow the University of Idaho to secure 2.5 acres within the corridor. It also allows University of Idaho to enter a new lease to remain in the Harbor Center. The lease contains an option for an additional 99 years.

City officials had trouble explaining how the city created a \$1.3 million figure for the lease agreement of the property. Mayor Sandi Bloem said the figure goes back to 2002, when the University of Idaho needed a permanent spot for its programs.

"The monetary part of the lease is only part of the consideration," Bloem said. "It's also based on jobs, educational opportunities and permanency for U of I. That number has been out there for a long time."

Branen didn't know the history of the \$1.3 million amount. He said the university is conducting an appraisal of Harbor Center, where it currently leases 30,000 square feet of floor space for \$10 a year, including 7.5 acres of land.

The University of Idaho would like to build a \$24 million building in the corridor. The Legislature already has given \$420,000 for planning and design of the project, Branen said.

The university would likely continue to lease space at the Harbor Center. Branen said the plans include creating a water quality research facility there.

Bloem said she doesn't believe the lease agreement is being rushed through the process.

"Absolutely not," she said. "We've been in negotiations for this lease for five or six months at least. The Board of Education needs to be feel comfortable. There has been lots of discussion going back and forth."

Bloem also said she believes the city is acting in the best interests of the public with the agreement.

"The public has told us to go for higher education and to create public

FROM THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Event honors foster kids who beat odds to graduate

Dyzyray Mirelez, 18, is a foster child who will be attending Eastern Washington University this fall. She was selected as a Governor's Scholar. The Spokesman-Review (Brian Plonka The Spokesman-Review)

Alison Boggs
Staff writer
June 6, 2008

Dyzyray Mirelez is headed to Eastern Washington University on a four-year scholarship after she graduates from North Central High School on Saturday. It's the first step in her plan to become a broadcast journalist.

Normal dreams for a 19-year-old?

Perhaps, but for Mirelez, the path has been rockier than for most. Her father's death when she was an infant was followed shortly by the death of her baby sister. She thinks the second death was just too much for her mother, who left her family when Mirelez was in grade school.

The youngest of five, Mirelez and her siblings fended for themselves for a while and then moved in with their aunt. Though their house was always filled with family, Mirelez said she sometimes longed for the more "normal" lives her high school friends took for granted.

"I didn't get a chance to do everything they did," she said before a luncheon Thursday to recognize Spokane foster kids who are graduating from high school. "I'd be so thankful to have what they have."

Mirelez is one of 21 Spokane County foster kids and more than 350 statewide who will graduate from high school or receive their General Educational Development certificates this year. For many, that accomplishment is elusive. In Washington, only about 40 percent of foster children graduate from high school or receive a GEDs. That's compared with an overall statewide graduation rate of 72 percent, according to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Several programs exist statewide to help more foster kids graduate from high school and go on to college or vocational training. The Independent Living Program helps foster children gain the skills to live on their own, offering help when it comes to landing jobs, furthering their education, finding safe housing and managing budgets.

The Educational and Training Voucher Program provides as much as \$5,000 a year up to age 23 for higher education. Other programs provide mentoring and support to help ensure success in post-secondary education.

In 2001, then-Gov. Gary Locke established the Governor's Scholarship to help foster kids enroll in state colleges. The scholarships can be used for as long as five years, as long as students keep their grades up and enroll full-time. The scholarships range from \$1,000 to \$5,000 a year, depending on need. About 30 Governor's Scholars are selected statewide every year.

"They're very hard to get," said Heidi Peterson, program director for Spokane's Independent Living program, run by Volunteers of America. "Only two kids on this side of the state received them this year."

Those two kids are Mirelez and 18-year-old Minh Layne, who will graduate from Riverside High School today.

Layne's life on a farm with his foster mother and three foster brothers led to his desire to become a veterinarian. He'll enter Washington State University in the fall to study preveterinary medicine.

Layne said his biological mother was very young when he was born and didn't have the means to raise him. However, Layne said, he sees his mother regularly and has a good relationship with her.

"I'm actually thankful for what she did," Layne said. "I was placed in a good home with a good foster parent who raised me well."

FROM THE MOSCOW PULLMAN DAILY NEWS (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

No new education news stories posted online.

FROM THE LEWISTON TRIBUNE (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

No new education news stories posted online.

FROM THE IDAHO-PRESS TRIBUNE, NAMPA

No new education news stories posted online.

FROM THE IDAHO STATESMAN

Bell tolls for Cole: 120-year-old school closes its doors

Katherine Jones/Idaho Statesman

Kayleesa Alwine waves goodbye to her teachers lining the sidewalks and to her school. Thursday was the last day of classes at the school, which will be torn down.

Katherine Jones/Idaho Statesman

Cole Elementary School principal Rose Beebe hugs McKenzie Benanate, who burst into tears on the last day of school. It also was the last day for the school, which will be torn down. SEE MORE PHOTOS ONLINE AT IDAHOSTATESMAN.COM/PHOTOGALLERIES

Ex-Cole student remembers uncongested intersection

CHANGES FOR BOISE SCHOOLS FOR 2008-09

Mountain Cove High School and Fort Boise Mid High, to be combined into Frank Church High School at the district office off Victory Road.

South Junior High, to be rebuilt on the same location on Shoshone Street.

West Junior High, to be rebuilt at the district office off Victory Road.

Cole, Franklin, Jackson and McKinley elementaries, to be combined into one of two new elementary schools opening in fall, Grace Jordan and Morley Nelson.

BY BILL ROBERTS - broberts@idahostatesman.com

Edition Date: 06/06/08

Cole Elementary School enriched minds almost up to the last second of its 120-year life Thursday.

Kristen Nichols, 21, spent a few minutes on Cole's last day videotaping herself giving a brief geometry lesson to first-graders. It was part of a project she's using to apply for an education degree at Idaho State University.

Sixteen years ago, she went to kindergarten at Cole.

"When I finally decided I wanted to teach elementary education I was really hoping I'd get to teach in the school where I started my education," she said.

But that won't be possible.

Cole Elementary's school bell - a real-life, old-school, pull-the-rope bell-tower bell - rang out for the last time Thursday, heralding the coming of summer and the end of Cole School, which opened in 1888, when Grover Cleveland was president.

The Boise School District closed Cole as part of a districtwide building improvement program. Cole is one of the Boise schools that closed Thursday. Most will be rebuilt elsewhere.

The fate of the iconic building, with its bell tower looming above Fairview Avenue, is uncertain.

Thanks to an old deed provision, the Children's Home Society would benefit from the sale of a 1.25-acre portion of the property. Boise School District is exploring buying that parcel - then putting the entire seven acres up for bid.

But district officials haven't had many nibbles on the property.

Still, there has been interest in purchasing the bell on the school's rooftop, said Stan Olson, district superintendent. It isn't original, however. The bell was part of an upgrade to Cole about 20 years ago.

Cole's last day was teary and full of hugs and waves of goodbye.

Connie Auth, who has taught at Cole for 19 years, tucked the last of her students' report cards into envelopes and reflected on what it meant to spend so much of her career at the one-time rural school.

A few days ago, as she was cleaning out her classroom, she ran across some project ideas she and another teacher compiled to help parents teach their kids about colors. That teacher died of Alzheimer's a couple of years ago.

"There is a history here that lives on in people's hearts," Auth said.

Don Spencer began his 39-year teaching career at Cole.

When he started in 1969, the school was already 81 years old and surrounded by pastures. There was one small Albertson's store across Fairview, north of Cole.

Teaching in a century-old building was a delight for Spencer. But he conceded "there are some downsides to being in an old school: no floor space, no counter space ... creaky floors."

The tunnel between the main building and the cafeteria under the gym - built to keep kids from getting wet when it rained - is a trademark for the school.

"Anybody that comes back to visit the building, the first thing they want to do is walk through the tunnel," Spencer said.

Sometimes, kindergartners were leery of entering the tunnel because they couldn't see the other end, said Principal Rose Beebe.

She spent the day trying not to think about the emotional side of the school closing.

"I have not thought about it much," Beebe said. "I'm thinking about my grocery list (of tasks to complete)."

At 1:15 p.m. Thursday, Beebe climbed to the school's second story and tugged on the blue and white rope connected to the bell on the roof.

Kids piled out of the buildings.

There were waves of goodbye between teachers and students. One bus honked its horn as it pulled out of the driveway.

Out on the playground, the chains that once clanked against the tether-ball polls were silent.

So was the bell. And the chatter of kids.

Only the noise of cars whizzing past on Fairview and Cole filled the quiet.

Bill Roberts 377-6408

Students will have more summer, but longer school days too

- STATESMAN STAFF

Edition Date: 06/06/08

Caldwell trustees voted Wednesday to change the length of the school day and alter the school calendar for the upcoming academic year.

The change lengthens this year's summer vacation, but adds five hours of instructional time to the year.

Trustees voted to change the starting date from Aug. 18 to Aug. 28, while the last day of school will remain May 28.

To make up for the lost days, trustees voted to add 30 minutes to the school day.

In the coming year, elementary school will run from 8:40 a.m. to 3:40 p.m., middle school from 7:45 a.m. to 3:10 p.m., and high school from 7:50 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Ex-Cole student remembers uncongested intersection

- Idaho Statesman

Edition Date: 06/06/08

La Vonne Rasmussen, 81, who attended Cole from 1932 to the eighth grade in 1940, visited the school on its last day at the Statesman's invitation.

Here are some of her memories:

Getting to school: "Everybody walked. I think there were a few bicycles.

"There was one family that lived way out on Ustick and they had a horse and buggy. The poor old horse got hitched up to the hitching post and stood there all day."

Pats on the back: "I remember there were two things that were a big honor. One of them was getting to ring the bell for recess and noon. The other was being a school crossing guard, which was kind of ironic because there was only maybe half a dozen cars that (would) go by all the time you were out there."

Teacher memories: I remember (a) teacher who had a rubber hose and hit us on the ankles. Not me. Very strict.

The cloak closet: "There was kind of a musty smell with galoshes and everything the kids put in there."

Was she good at schoolwork? "No. I'd rather have been out on the softball field. "

Bill Roberts

BSU housing interest strains available space

The university plans to build new apartments and dorms, and hopes to lease an existing building until those are built.

BY ANNE WALLACE ALLEN - aallen@idahostatesman.com

Edition Date: 06/06/08

Boise State University is fielding more requests than expected for on-campus housing in the coming academic year. Now the university is trying to lease a Boise apartment building to house those students.

"I'd much rather have this challenge than the other side of not having enough students," said Jeff Hale, executive director of university housing.

The university has put out a request for proposals to house about 50 people.

Meanwhile, Boise State is working with an Austin, Texas, company called American Campus Communities to build housing to accommodate 2,000 students. ACC will build apartments and dormitories on Lincoln Avenue between University Drive and Beacon Street. ACC will retain ownership of the housing and Boise State will lease it. That housing won't be ready until 2010, said BSU spokesman Frank Zang.

University officials are trying to get more students to live on campus to increase the cohesiveness of the student body at the mostly commuter school.

"University housing places our students at the center of campus life, helping them to make the most of their college experience," said Michael LaLiberte, vice president for student affairs.

"Our housing is much more than just a place to sleep. We are developing residential communities that bring together students with similar academic and extracurricular interests."

The university has six traditional dorms, three suite-style halls for upperclassmen, and five apartment complexes. That housing is full with about 2,200 students, Zang said.

Boise State started the 2007-2008 academic year with about 19,540 students. University officials have said they hoped to increase enrollment 3 percent in the coming year.

Early indications show that increase is likely to occur, and push enrollment over 20,000 for the first time in Boise State's history, according to Zang.

Anne Wallace Allen: 377-6433

Our View: City leaders need to assure fairness for teens (Editorial)

- Idaho Statesman

Edition Date: 06/06/08

College scholarships are designed to foster learning - so we can only hope Meridian City Hall learns a valuable lesson.

City leaders took a good idea and a worthy cause and made an embarrassing mess of it. They awarded four scholarships of \$1,000 apiece, including one to RoAnne de Weerd, the daughter of Mayor Tammy de Weerd. Two other scholarship winners have connections to city government.

We don't blame the scholarship winners or question their community involvement. We blame the grownups.

City leaders, including the mayor, failed to put enough front-end thought into process and procedure. Then, apparently no one stopped and asked about the obvious perception problems that would come with awarding scholarship money to the child of an elected official. No troubleshooting, no questions asked. That's a fine formula for conflicts of interest.

City leaders now acknowledge that they need to review the process, an obvious if belated start.

The scholarships didn't come from taxpayers - but it came from leftover money raised for Meridian's annual State of the City address, one of Tammy de Weerd's most high-profile public appearances as the city's top elected official. The money came from a city account under the control of the mayor's office. Common sense and due diligence call for treating these dollars with the same care afforded to tax dollars.

Yet these scholarships were awarded with minimal safeguards. The mayor was not involved in the judging. The 14 students' names were blacked out on their applications.

In RoAnne De Weerd's case, this step probably had little effect. Three of the four judges were members of the Meridian Promise Board, which RoAnne de Weerd co-chairs. One judge, state Rep. Mark Snodgrass, hired RoAnne de Weerd to work on his state Senate campaign - a fact that Snodgrass says was not blacked out on her application.

City Council member Keith Bird - another scholarship judge - said he could tell right away which application came from the mayor's daughter. That's exactly the point. The same experience that made RoAnne de Weerd a deserving scholarship applicant also rendered her application unmistakable and problematic.

The city will put together a group to review the scholarship process. Setting clear guidelines - and eliminating conflicts of interest - should be the first order of business.

This is a recurring question. Another of this year's winners, Sara Steele, is an unpaid youth member of the city Parks and Recreation Commission; another, Breianna McCutchen, was a paid intern in City Hall during the school year.

The committee needs to discuss this situation, Tammy de Weerd said Thursday, but the mayor isn't sure the program needs to be changed. "I'd rather it focus on the kids and if they're deserving." She doesn't seem to grasp the severity of the situation. Three of a city's four scholarship winners have ties to City Hall. The resulting ethical problem reflects badly on the mayor and City Hall - and unfairly on the winners.

"Our View" is the editorial position of the Idaho Statesman. It is an unsigned opinion expressing the consensus of the Statesman's editorial board. To comment on an editorial or suggest a topic, e-mail editorial@idahostatesman.com.

FROM THE TWIN FALLS TIMES-NEWS

UI president says his exit won't hurt university

By JESSIE BONNER

BOISE, Idaho - University of Idaho President Tim White says he doesn't expect his impending departure to derail key initiatives on the Moscow campus, including plans to build a law school branch in Boise.

The state Board of Education is looking for someone to temporarily fill the position after White resigns June 30 to become chancellor of the University of California-Riverside.

White said he'll make himself available to the person chosen to steer the university while a national search is carried out to fill the position permanently.

"I'll be a great ex-president," White told the Associated Press on Thursday.

White was largely responsible for stabilizing the university after he was named president four years ago during a tumultuous time for the Moscow campus, which faced budget cuts, faculty turnover and a financial scandal that stemmed from a failed expansion project in Boise.

He made significant changes in university administration and said making financial procedures transparent was among his top priorities.

As he leaves, White said he doesn't expect any mass exodus or any significant gaps in daily operations.

"If I would have thought I was leaving the place in a lurch, I wouldn't have made the decision," he said.

Education board officials have said they'll name an interim president by the end of the month.

During his presidency, White said he helped the university raise more than \$70 million.

The school will need an articulate spokesman to further "bold plans" to expand the law school with a branch in Boise, as well as help carry out fundraising for a \$52 million Kibbie Dome improvement project, he added.

A service of the Associated Press(AP)

Southwest Idaho mayor's daughter gets city scholarship money

MERIDIAN, Idaho - Officials in this southwestern Idaho city say they will reconsider policies next year after the mayor's daughter was picked to receive a \$1,000 college scholarship from city money in a process that had applicants and judges selected by the mayor's staff.

"I know the perception looks bad," Meridian City Councilman Keith Bird, one of four people who judged the winners, told the Idaho Statesman. "But I can honestly tell you nothing happened under the table. RoAnne deserves this award."

Though the applications had the names removed, Bird told the newspaper he knew right away which one belonged to the mayor's daughter.

RoAnne de Weerd, Mayor Tammy de Weerd's daughter, was one of four high school seniors chosen from 14 applicants to receive \$1,000 for next year's college bills. RoAnne de Weerd was rewarded for community service.

The scholarship program, now in its second year, gets its money from leftover cash donated to the city for the annual State of the City address. The mayor's office controls the account where the money is kept.

"I was removed from the process," said the mayor, who announced the winners last week at a City Council meeting with her daughter by her side. "In hindsight, I'm sure my staff would have done things different. From now on, we are going to spell everything out."

She said City Attorney Bill Nary looked into possible conflicts with the mayor's daughter being given money from the city but found none.

A city staff member chose Bird and three members of the Meridian Promise Board to look at applications of possible scholarship winners and pick winners. RoAnne de Weerd is a co-chairwoman of the Promise Board.

Rep. Mark Snodgrass, R-Meridian, was one of the three board members who volunteered. He employed RoAnne de Weerd in his recent campaign for the Idaho Senate and was listed as one of her references on the application.

The 18-year-old who is graduating from Meridian High School has an extensive history of volunteering in the community.

She donated more than 500 hours in the last year; chairs or serves on more than a dozen civic, nonprofit, social and political organizations; and works as volunteer coordinator for both the Idaho Meth Project and the Ada County Republican Women.

Still, experts said a gift of city money to the mayor's daughter calls into question the process.

"Meridian is no longer a small town and a lot of their processes have to become more formal and more sophisticated than what they do in a small town," said Elizabeth Fredericksen, a Boise State University public policy and administration professor. "There are some lessons to take from this. This is a symptom of growing pains, it is not malicious."

Jasper LiCalzi is chairman of The College of Idaho's department of political economy, where RoAnne de Weerd plans to take classes.

He said that some political leaders in other states have used donations to pay for scholarships as an indirect way for businesses to kick back money to family and friends of public officials.

He said he didn't think that was going on in Meridian, but that elected officials and people appointed to boards must "avoid any appearance of impropriety."

He suggested that the city make the children of elected officials and employees ineligible for the scholarship.

Bird said changes could be made in the city's procedure on the scholarships.

"I think we need to look at it _ I think maybe we have some loopholes," he said. "As we get larger, I think we should take more of a look."

Information from: Idaho Statesman, <http://www.idahostatesman.com>

A service of the Associated Press(AP)

FROM THE IDAHO STATE JOURNAL (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Students clean Greenway trail

Academy at Roosevelt Center volunteers trim trees, clear debris

BY DEBBIE BRYCE

dbryce@journalnet.com

POCATELLO — Students from the Academy at Roosevelt Center turned out with rakes, lawn mowers and shovels Thursday to clean a one-mile stretch of the Portneuf Greenway.

Kaigan Young, 12, and Taylor Ellin, 15, blew leaves and debris off the trail along Riverside Drive while their classmates trimmed trees and mowed weeds.

Ellin said seventh- and eighth-graders at the school are required to perform 20 hours of community service before they graduate.

About 150 students in grades five through eight participated in the cleanup, and a number of parent volunteers donated tools and pickup trucks for the day.

SchoolboardmemberMike Parker said the Academy at Roosevelt Center has a two-year commitment with the Greenway Foundation to clean the trail in the summer and in the fall.

“Our goal is to have some fundraisers to buy some benches and picnic tables as well,” Parker said.

Sixth-grade teacher Kris Phelps said the students started at 8 a.m.

And by 1 p.m., five truckloads of refuse had been hauled away.

Phelps said the students were divided into eight crews; seven focused on cleaning the trail, while one concentrated on tree trimming.

Principal Rafael Cde Baca said community service is part of the charter school’s mission. Past projects included helping to build a library at Portneuf Medical Center.

Kelly Watson, a fifth-grade teacher at the Academy, organized the event and said the students are looking forward to coming back in the fall.

“They’re working really hard and can’t wait to start planting and doing some of the fun stuff,” she said.

Watson said Ridley’s, Smith’s Food in Chubbuck, Fred Meyer, Subway, Domino’s Pizza, McDonald’s, Winco and Gem State Distributing donated food and drinks Thursday.

Hannah Sanger, executive director at the Portneuf Greenway Foundation, said the students performed an invaluable service.

With only one parttime employee, Sanger said community volunteers play a vital role in maintaining and expanding the Greenway.

“The Greenway doesn’t really have a budget,” she said. “This is how the Greenway is growing. I hope (the students) will use the Greenway more now.”

Meridian to reconsider its scholarship policies

MERIDIAN, Idaho (AP) — Officials in this southwestern Idaho city say they will reconsider policies next year after the mayor’s daughter was picked to receive a \$1,000 college scholarship from city money in a process that had applicants and judges selected by the mayor’s staff.

“I know the perception looks bad,” Meridian City Councilman Keith Bird, one of four people who judged the winners, told the Idaho Statesman. “But I can honestly tell you nothing happened under the table. RoAnne deserves this award.”

Though the applications had the names removed, Bird told the newspaper he knew right away which one belonged to the mayor’s daughter.

RoAnne de Weerd, daughter of Mayor Tammy de Weerd, was one of four high school seniors chosen from 14 applicants to receive \$1,000 for next year’s college bills. RoAnne de Weerd was rewarded for community service.

The scholarship program, now in its second year, gets its money from leftover cash donated to the city for the annual State of the City address. The mayor’s office controls the account where the money is kept.

“I was removed from the process,” said the mayor, who announced the winners last week at a City Council meeting with her daughter by her side. “In hindsight, I’m sure my staff would have done things different. From now on, we are going to spell everything out.”

She said City Attorney Bill Nary looked into possible conflicts with the mayor’s daughter being given money from the city but found none.

A city staff member chose Bird and three members of the Meridian Promise Board to look at applications of possible scholarship winners and pick winners. RoAnne de Weerd is a co-chairwoman of the Promise Board.

Rep. Mark Snodgrass, RMeridian, was one of the three board members who volunteered. He employed RoAnne de Weerd in his recent campaign for the Idaho Senate and was listed as one of her references on the application.

The 18-year-old who is graduating from Meridian High School has an extensive history of volunteering in the community.

She donated more than 500 hours in the last year; chairs or serves on more than a dozen civic, nonprofit, social and political organizations; and works as volunteer coordinator for both the Idaho Meth Project and the Ada County Republican Women.

Still, experts said a gift of city money to the mayor’s daughter calls into question the process.

“Meridian is no longer a small town and a lot of their processes have to become more formal and more sophisticated than what they do in a small town,” said Elizabeth Fredericksen, a Boise State University public policy and administration professor. “There are some lessons to take from this. This is a symptom of growing pains, it is not malicious.”

FROM THE IDAHO FALLS POST REGISTER (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Madison bond passes

Voters approve \$19.5 million for new high school

By KIM NOTEBOOM and PHIL DAVIDSON

Amanda Smith / asmith@postregister.com - Janice Tychsen watches as a voter turns in her ballot at Madison High School in Rexburg on Thursday. The Madison School District asked voters to OK a \$19.5 million bond to help pay for a new high school. Voters approved a bond for the project two years ago, but officials say more money is needed because of rising construction costs.

Madison School District voters narrowly approved a \$19.5 million bond Tuesday night in what officials said was a record election turnout.

Just more than 68 percent of the 4,470 voters who cast a ballot Tuesday night voted yes, district spokeswoman Janet Goodliffe said. State law requires 66 2/3 percent of the ballots cast be in support for a bond to pass.

Madison School District Superintendent Geoffrey Thomas praised the entire community for their support of the new high school.

"This yes vote represents the recognition of a growing community and the strong support for children in public education," he said in a prepared statement.

Voters were back at the polls to cast ballots seven months after a \$16 million bond request failed.

"I voted yes because education is really important," said Chris Marcum, adding that as the world advances, the ability to teach should as well.

Teresa Kolsen said she voted in favor of the bond, "However, I'm not happy about the process."

Susan Ward was happy to give a yes vote.

"We need to support our schools," she said.

Pursuit of the new school dates to 2003, when the school board first developed a school facility plan to address the aging buildings. In August 2006, patrons approved a \$40.5 million request for a high school, a new elementary school and renovations to the Lyman and Archer school buildings.

Rising construction costs, however, left district officials with insufficient funds to build the high school.

A \$16 million bond failed in December, when only 61 percent of the ballots cast were in favor. After the December bond was turned down, the school district hired a construction management firm to review its numbers.

In February, the school board hired Hogan & Associates of Centerville, Utah, to provide better cost estimates. The company spent three months reviewing details, analyzing cost savings and coming up with cost projections for the high school project. Those projections were presented to the school board, and the board reviewed them and set the bond at \$19.5 million.

Aaron Metcalfe, Hogan's chief marketing officer, said the company was eager to begin construction on the project after Tuesday's successful vote.

"We are excited to start moving dirt and to continue working with the community and local subcontractors to complete the new high school," he said in a statement.